

Respiratory Protection Week 2021 Resources and Review

September 7, 2021 by Jaclyn Krah Cichowicz, MA



It's Respiratory Protection Week! Every year we are happy to acknowledge this observance as a time for a little R&R. No – we aren't implying that you should take a nap. By R&R we mean new resources and review of all NIOSH respiratory protection information that has become available since last September.

Over the course of the last year and a half, NIOSH's National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory has received a lot of questions about respiratory protection from respirator users, educators, respiratory protection program managers, and general respirator enthusiasts. We analyzed the most frequently asked questions and updated our trusty [Respirator Trusted-Source webpage](#) with the appropriate

information. This resource is the first stop for anyone looking to learn the basics about respirators. Check it out! While you're there, take a stroll around the much-improved [NIOSH-NPPTL website](#), which has a brand-new look!

This update is part of NIOSH's greater effort to serve our stakeholders by expanding our respiratory protection portfolio to ensure that all workers required to use respirators to protect themselves from workplace hazards have access to the information and equipment they need. You can provide input into this process! NIOSH currently has an open [Federal Register Notice](#) (FRN) addressing our efforts to include activities that consider the needs of U.S. worker populations who are underserved related to personal protective equipment (PPE) use, availability, accessibility, acceptability, or knowledge. Comment through the FRN link above (not on this blog). This FRN closes, October 15, 2021.

Attendees to this year's first Respiratory Protection Week webinar (Tuesday, September 7th) will have an opportunity to hear more about this FRN and other NIOSH objectives as we look to the future. [The Future of Respiratory Protection and other Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#) webinar will discuss the real-world application of novel and emerging technologies in respiratory protection, the new role of PPE in non-traditional settings, and closing PPE gaps for underserved populations.

NIOSH will host a second Respiratory Protection Week webinar on Thursday, September 9th. The [Authorities Associated with Respiratory Protection – The Role of NIOSH, the FDA, and OSHA](#) webinar will emphasize how NIOSH shares the mission of protecting workers who rely on respirators to keep them safe with several other federal agencies. NIOSH will be joined by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) as we take a deeper dive into this subject and define each agency's role in the realm of respiratory protection.

NIOSH and the FDA have also worked together to spread the word about technological advancements in respirators, addressing the important topic of source control for elastomeric respirator use. Both the FDA and NIOSH have published articles on the subject.

[Elastomeric Respirator Innovations Play a Critical Role in Response to COVID-19 | FDA](#)

[Advancements in Elastomeric Respirator Technology for Use as Source Control Blogs | CDC](#)

Things can get pretty technical when it comes to the science behind respiratory protection. How do respirators work exactly, anyway? We break it down for you in a new fact sheet, [Understanding Filtration Efficiency Testing and Fit Testing in Filtering Facepiece Respirators \(FFRs\)](#), which explains how filtering facepiece respirators (FFRs) capture particles (like dust, dirt, and bacteria) and the NIOSH testing process that ensures they are capturing particles with utmost efficiency.

Speaking of technical, NIOSH is dedicated to advancing new knowledge in this highly scientific field. In particular, the topic of source control has been high on our radar both for elastomeric respirators and FFRs. You can read more about our findings on exhalation valves and FFRs in the recent NIOSH Technical Report, [Filtering Facepiece Respirators with an Exhalation Valve](#).

Understanding NIOSH's role in respiratory protection is important for a greater understanding of proper respirator use and the assurance that you can rely upon your NIOSH-approved respirator. Respirator users should have confidence that if they are using a NIOSH-approved respirator, it will perform as well in real-life situations as it did during the NIOSH testing process. For a quick guide on how you can tell that your respirator is NIOSH-approved, see our new fact sheet, [How to tell if your N95](#)

[Respirator is NIOSH Approved](#). You can also get a better appreciation for NIOSH's post-market quality assurance process by going back in time a few months to check out this year's Valentine's Day NIOSH Science Blog, [Relationship Advice on Valentine's Day: Quality Assurance—In a Respirator, That Is](#).

As always, we hope you are able to use this time to find some valuable respiratory protection resources. Look for other respirator enthusiast organizations proudly showing off their Respiratory Protection Week Participant banners and touting #RespiratorWeek on social media. We look forward to spending this time with you!

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